Your Community. Your College. Your Future.

This 2011 Muse is dedicated to Ms. Jill Chadwick who will be retiring in May. She has been the editor of the Muse since 2004 and a member of the editorial staff since 1988. Her talents brought this publication to the level of a national award-winning literary magazine and her influence will be remembered and emulated for years to come.

Ms. Chadwick has spent the last 28 years at Calhoun enriching the lives of her students and colleagues. Her wit, humor, insight, intelligence, kindness, and so many more wonderful aspects of her character will be sorely missed.

"Parting is such sweet sorrow."

- William Shakespeare

Calhoun Community College is committed to equal opportunity in employment and education. The College does not discriminate in any program or activity on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, disability, marital status or any other protected class.

Students who would like to request accommodations on the basis of disability should contact Disability Services at 256-306-2630 or dmh@calhoun.edu.

Calhoun Community College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award Associate's degrees and certificates. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Calhoun Community College. Specific questions regarding Calhoun's educational programs, admissions and other matters related specifically to the College should be forwarded directly to the College.

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Calhoun Community College is a tobacco-free college.
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Deep Harmony
by William E. Beasley

I can see our Batter now.
That sleek tilt toward the back foot,
Front foot almost floating.
The great ash laid over His shoulders,
Pointing skyward,
Wagging ominously.

My uniform is dirty, the entire back of my
Left leg brown from my slide into third.
I slap my pants, the smell of the earth
Resonating somewhere, reassuring.

As I crouch with one foot on third base,
I sense the possibilities.

And I am afraid.

The lefty on the mound has black eyes
And moves like quicksilver.
The ball is hidden
Behind his back.
He has all the pitches
And no good plans for me.

I got this far on a blooper over first,
Just getting a piece of his curve.
Lefty thinks I do not deserve to be here,
So close to home.

I know he might pick me off, but it is
Not every day you get this opportunity.

And I am afraid.

Our Coach has signaled me to steal home
On the next pitch.
I weigh ninety pounds soaking wet and the
Catcher must weigh a ton, all steel and muscle,
Guarding the plate for his pitcher
Like it was gold.

Well, that plate is not all his, and I plan to
Stake my claim on the next pitch.
I know if I hesitate
I will never make it.

The lefty starts his windup, and I take off
Flying like the wind.

Without fear.

Into nothingness.

* “O, but they say the tongues of dying men
Enforce attention like deep harmony.”

King Richard II, Act II, Scene I, Line 5.

Oil by Beth Hornish
A hand of leathered steel,  
The strongest hand I ever shook.  
Knuckles like taws,  
Fingers bent and crooked.

Reuben was Mammie and Pappie’s...  
Helper.  
He lived in a small house behind them  
In Pontotoc, Mississippi.

My first memory of him was when I was age five, at Christmas.  
Daddy introduced me to Reuben  
Outside the small house.

That is when I felt the hand.  
Something I never felt before or since.  
Gentle, massive strength,  
Not closing completely around mine.

We used to visit Mammie and Pappie  
Every Christmas.  
Aunts, uncles and cousins  
All together in the big house in front.

When we all got there,  
It was a tradition for Reuben  
To take my cousins and me  
Out to the patch of Christmas trees.

There, behind Reuben’s house,  
We would cut the Christmas tree.  
Reuben would smile  
When we cheered the fall.

He called us mister or missus  
Before our first name.  
We never called him Anything but Reuben.

I got to see the inside of Reuben’s home  
Once.  
All I remember was the darkness  
And the simplicity.

He was getting us some rope  
To pull our wagon  
We got from Santa.  
“Now y’all be careful go’in down that hill.”

We would eat our meals  
Around the big table in the dining room.  
Mammie and Pappie sat together  
And the children sat together.

I remember asking my mother  
Why Reuben did not eat with us.  
And, as if it was the most natural  
Thing in the world,

She said, “Oh, Reuben eats in the kitchen.”  
I sensed something then.  
Something guttural,  
Something shameful.

I said nothing  
And the world changed.  
There were people,  
And there were kitchen eaters.

I got to see the inside of Reuben’s home  
Once.  
All I remember was the darkness  
And the simplicity.

He was getting us some rope  
To pull our wagon  
We got from Santa.  
“Now y’all be careful go’in down that hill.”

We would eat our meals  
Around the big table in the dining room.  
Mammie and Pappie sat together  
And the children sat together.

Lake Guntersville Lights  
Oil by Kathleen Bost
I’ve Not Yet Begged
by Daniel Byford

I’ve not yet begged with stranded eyes to kiss your lips,
and I doubt to reach casually to hold your hand,
yet when you flower a room just beyond my fingertips
I am displaced, a sleepwalker waked in a promised land,
a writer raveling a book of prayer, an emigrant from Nod
moving west, finding rest. I do not know the tale’s end,
nor do I wish to read ahead to ken the journey. How odd
to discover joy again in knowing nothing. If I could send
your heart my message in a bottle, it would simply say thank you,
and on my desert island I would live out my days content
that I had said enough, just the right words to get me through
my silver years. Someday you may find this, wondering whom I sent
it to. And I hope I’m there to answer. I hope I’m there to touch
your face and read again the look in bright eyes that scribe so much.
What the Wind Said
by Daniel Byford

In Spring

Hush, Little Baby, 
now don’t you cry. 
Life’s all a mystery. 
Here’s mud in your eye.

Oh, be still and be good 
for just a short while. 
The toil and the blood 
aren’t yours the first mile.

Now grow as I thunder 
and learn as I sigh, 
for the world waits your wonder 
as I pass you by.

Off to bed, off to school 
off the couch with your shoes 
hit the books, watch the rule 
understand what’s whose,

In Summer

Scream, if you want, for I scream louder, and no one will hear you. 
Roar across your reality dream, 
chaos in your wake. Storms brew each other until they all give out and not everyone sees a rainbow. 
As you grow tall, as you look about, 
while you search, while you sow, 
during your finest hours, your worst defeats, 
I am cool breeze, stiff blow, harsh gale, 
terrible tornado, freakish hurricane. History repeats itself because we aren’t listening. Life flits. Hell, isn’t it? Yet it can be heaven, too. You wait mostly in between. Where the bored things are. Between birth and death, love and hate, work and play, home and horizon, dirt and star. Memento mori et caveat emptor is my best advice otherwise lay down your money and roll the dice.

In Autumn

Fall is the quickest time of year, a hurried pulse 
drums the time away. You grow a bit weary of the fuzzy little failures and even the success too often feels cheap. But the air is clear. No dreary stagnation here. You realize more than half the year was spent playing headgames or sleepworking. 

Stack up the hours you slept, shit, showered, and you fear it’s all slipping away. Sometimes you wake jerking like you’ve been had. “Study hard and keep your nose clean” seems to have given you only tired eyes and a sore nose. But you learn to appreciate the little things. Or you glean religion. Or tinge with song and dance. Little trips, maybe. Clothes.

The question is does it or doesn’t it all add up? 
Time may be relative. The universe may enfold like a self-swallowing snake in an endless loop, but who really gives a crap? Soon enough, you’re old. What more is there to this life but family and friends? Just try to get ready for the winter before fall ends.

In Winter

Shut up and listen. Grow quiet and put on layers against the killing frost. Become as solid as you can, for time dates no one for long. As you say your prayers, that sound you hear is me laughing as you plan. 

As aches grow in the joints, lights dim in the eyes, as your vine withers or your blooms fade and shed—remember nothing means much, except the surprise at those who still love you and the gnawing dread as you hear that certain phone voice telling you someone close is dead. You are not born alone. Even orphans had help getting through to this mortal quicksand. Scorn is the fruit of scorn.

Life can truly come alive, but many walking it are dead. You make it a sunny meadow or lightless pit all on your own. And you carry that in your head or heart when you leave and nothing else will fit. In the end, I had no real power over you but power to make you stronger and fill your sail in the final hour.
A Space in Sylvia’s House
(Suite 104, Lawrence House, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts) – by Hameed El-Amin

Scrunching the hardened leather
Of once peculiar desire
I leaned forward
Confident as if you were the silvery muse
Sliding in at my back
Your one paradoxically happy place
Resonating the incongruity
Of my “Black…Male” status

My words, and the ghostly creaking of rhythmic female feet
Moving trunks over cracks of long settled wooden floors
Filled with evening gowns, bobby socks,
Spiked golf shoes, varied ski and riding pants,
Frilly things, fifty sets of heels, woolen winter skirts

Well aged anachronisms
Of feminist seed
Cultivated in ivy covered seclusion
Flowering as bounteous desire
Where night birds sang duets

Coifed and manicured
With inexhaustible old money,
Accruing copious interest
From brown skin service
Massasoit wampum…
And grace…from G-d…

Inspired by the memory of poet and Smithy – Sylvia Plath
Lawrence house was the residence of Sylvia Plath during her days as a Smithy.
Smith College – Lawrence House – 6/25/04…

Sunrise
Photo by Amy Sylors
Hallelujah Never Done Me Right
by Kimberly Gardner

I was sittin’ by the road with a duffel bag in hand,
my thumb pointing to where I wanted to go.

I hitched a ride with a lady in a Cadillac.
She didn’t say a word, just hit “play” on her 8-track.

Glory, Glory Hallelujah filled the air.
So I made her stop right there,

cause no Glory, Glory Hallelujah ever done me right.
I slept beneath a bridge that night.

A fellow drifter gave me whiskey that next mornin’.
He didn’t ask where I was going, just from where I was comin’.

I said “I left my boots in Tennessee,
that place has got a hold of all my memories,

now I’m off to start again. I’m goin’ that-tha-way.”
He said “there has to be a reason for running away.
There has to be someone that begged you to stay.

What’ll you find in a new place?
Just another sad face,
when you pick up and put another heart in your bag.”

I thanked the man for his whiskey,
told him not to miss me,
and walked to the nearest diner.

I only had enough for a coffee, so I sat down at a booth.
What should play next on the jukebox, but the divine truth of Glory, Glory Hallelujah.

Some would see that as a sign,
but I didn’t waste time
in takin’ my coffee to go.

Tears rolled down my cheeks as the memory started to show.
Glory, Glory Hallelujah was the last song my baby girl would know.

No Glory, Glory Hallelujah ever done me right.
Cause I held my angel one sorrowful night.

As the choir sang, she breathed her last, then
She flew away into my past,
No Glory, Glory Hallelujah ever done me right.
**Penelope**  
*by Jonathon Tyler*

My kindest regards to Tennyson, but he did not know Penelope. Nor did he know what a scorned woman, who is fed up with the attitude of the man she loves, would be capable of.

HA! And ha, again.  
Oh my lord always knew how to make a speech to a group of men!  
Yes, I, too, would have preferred adventure on the high seas,  
The sun in my face and the wind in my hair  
Than having to sit at home behind my loom with men (more like beasts)  
Gathered on the floor below, awaiting my hand- and my son’s doom.  
For ten years I waited for you, Ulysses.  
For ten years I kept your kingdom.  
For TEN years I guarded your store!  
For TEN YEARS I slept alone and cried myself to sleep!  
For ten years I loved your name and never gave up hope you would come home to me.  
Through all that time I knew no comfort  
(though I hear you had comforters, two)  
Save the hope that if you died... my heart would know.  
Then— Oh how glorious was that day!  
You came home to Ithaca in disguise (typical you).  
You vanquished the foes in every competition I could devise,  
And then sent those dogs and their wenches down to Hell— why?  
The long journey, despair, blood and death... Did you not say it was all out of love for me?  
And our first night together again—  
By Aphrodite, I think we shook the pillars of the Earth!  
And do you honestly think that after all the hell I’ve been through  
That I would just step aside and watch you go, again?

That because I am an “old wife” I will let my husband, my heart,  
Leave me alone to go gallivanting off with his men?  
NO! By every god that the Greeks and others can invent, NO!  
I waited too long, and I loved you too much and too hard,  
To just watch you go and leave me behind forever.  
The next great journey we take, my love, we take as close together as possible.  
Now then, supper is finished and on the table.  
Dismiss the men and come take your place at the head of the house.  
And don’t fret too much, dear.  
Tonight we’ll have such an adventure that even old fish face couldn’t shake his trident at it.
Verisimilitude
by Ryan Wood

i don't know what it is
or if it has meaning,
but i can feel it viciously pulling me,
i can feel it
strongly tugging me to the point of
Eating me.

A moment of vertigo, then
i feel as though i'm falling
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Burning Pages
by Maria Lofgren Coble

She is leaving us slowly. If, as Amadou Hampaté Bâ said, “the death of an old person is like a burning of the library,” listening to Grandma is like watching someone grab books off her shelves and toss them in the flaming fire, one each day.

I long to run and grab and yell. I want to scream at the one throwing away these books: “No, I haven’t read that one yet! She never told me that memory! You can’t throw it away before I make a copy. You can’t throw it away before I know who she was before she became the grandma I knew.” I wish I had treasured my Grandma’s stories more, asked more about her experiences instead of talking about mine. She was such a constant in my life that I forgot I couldn’t keep her always.

But no matter how much I rail at him, Alzheimers keeps tossing the books straight into the fire as we all sit silently and watch. If only I could ... I would tackle him and wrestle him to the floor. I would guard her books of memories with my body and let Alzheimer’s beat me to a bloody pulp. I am young; I can withstand the pain. Yet she sits there silently, not stopping him as Alzheimer’s grabs another off her shelf and shreds it as he feeds it into the fire. She lets it go, and I must let her go, one painful moment at a time.

Each day, another book is gone. Another piece of my grandma is gone, another page ripped out, more words erased and my puzzle of her will never be complete after all.

I was going to write her story. I promised her I would, but then I married and I birthed infants and I nursed babies and I went back to college. I forgot that her mind might not stay sharp, as she sat waiting for my young feet to stop by long enough to hear her heart. I failed the one who rescued me as a child, the one who answered every single question in my letters when she lived 40 years overseas, the one who read every one of my poems to her quilting group. She was strong; she was smart. Whoever didn’t know her missed a treasure. She nourished the souls of all who knew her. Yet none of us can save her from this confusion that is stealing her, away from us and away from herself.

Also in this room of endings sits my sister, and within her floats an angel baby, a child I have yet to meet, a dream whose stories haven’t yet been written.

I hug Grandma tight. Grandma doesn’t eat anymore. Somehow, no matter how we nudge and beg and tease, she never eats more than six bites a day. Every day, her bones show through her skin. As her bulk melts away, her wrinkles gouge even deeper, like an ancient parchment, newly discovered, that I long to read. But the words are faded and indistinct; can any method restore the words I squint to see? Can’t anyone give back her mind so she can be my smart, witty Grandma once more, even for just a few hours? I want to laugh with her one more time, see her laughing with comprehension in her eyes.

But tonight I hug my grandma, looking at my sister with her unborn angel inside. As I hug grandma tightly, I feel her shoulder blade poking out, as though she’s already growing her wings.

One is being slowly taken; one is being slowly grown.

And, as I squeeze Grandma tight, even in my selfish heart, I cannot deny her wings.

My heart is destroyed as she leaves us. I want her to be mine always, to hold my children, to play cards with them as she did with me, to tell the funny stories that made all of us laugh. Yet,
deep inside, I know she longs to fly, away from her old, decrepit body, to soar to worlds unknown, to travel again as she did in her health. With her next step, she will leave me behind.

I hug her close as my heart releases her spirit. I let her go as I anticipate another angel, my sister’s child, to hold within my arms. This babe won’t know her great-grandmother except through the few stories I do recall, the few I can tell of this amazing woman. The stories so few, will the baby understand how wonderful Grandma truly was? Will she see her as vibrant and warm through the words we speak? I can only hope and dream, as in my heart I say good-bye.

Tonight, I weep for the Grandma I loved, for the Grandma who saved my spirit as a child, who believed I could write, who helped me go to college.

Tonight, I weep for my confused Grandma, for the stories never told, for the memories we would have laughed over sooner if I had only taken the time. I cannot grab back the books Alzheimers threw away, only tenderly smooth the pages of the ones present for today.

Tonight, I weep for my sweet, fading grandma, already growing wings.
The girl on the kitchen floor is me. I do not quite know how I got there. There was a flash—a loss of balance, breath, and self. A wail leaking from a throat—my own. A foggy voice struggling to lift me—my husband’s. My mind weaves in and out of my body, as I remember faintly what knocked me to the floor, what made me separate from myself. My mother’s phone call. She told my husband that daddy is dead, found him blue on the carpet as she rounded the banister of the stairs, an electric shock when the police confirmed it, an image of him floating down the stairs in a life sized zip-lock bag. Daddy is dead, my mother is alone at home, and I am suddenly standing in front of my closet searching for an outfit to wear to his funeral and trying desperately to ward off a panic attack.

How did I get here? Everything is flashing and swaying. My husband’s faint voice sounds as if he is speaking to me underwater, and I feel as if I’m struggling to breathe underwater; he tells me calmly that we need to pack clothes. Clothes? For what? He drives the two hours to my parents’ home. Why are we going home?

I walk into my parents’ house afraid that my dad is still there, that they haven’t gotten him out yet. I round every corner carefully, walk into each room unhurried, afraid that I will see his pale ghost…secretly hopeful that he will jump out and say just kidding. I’m frantic for the touch of my mother. I know what I must do. Must see her for the first time as a widow, must be stronger than something, must embrace her and fall to the bedroom floor and hear her whisper my name, must stay there, right there…there, there mom. I’m home.

Later, when mom is in the kitchen, I decide to brave my parents’ bedroom alone. The bed—mom will have to wash the sheets some day. His dirty laundry—where does it go now? A frame that holds my baby picture. And then…my throat locks around the journal that is propped on his nightstand. The pink title Butterfly Kisses caught my eye in the Hallmark store a year ago, and I had to get it for him. It is a two-part journal. I filled out the first half daughter to father and gave it to daddy as a present. As I stare at the nightstand, I am terrified that he hasn’t written in his half father to daughter. What if the pages of his love for me are blank? I open it to my own writing.

One thing I would still like for us to do together some day is: go fishing. I love to fish and haven’t been in a long time. It would be fun, peaceful, and it would be spending time with you.

You made me so embarrassed when you: found my naked pictures! Enough said!

Sometimes I think how my life would have been different if you had not been my dad:

I would have been empty.

Sometimes I think how my life would have been different if his artery had never burst, if my mother had never found him blue on the floor of the upstairs bedroom. Dizzy from the pound of my heart, I turn to his section of the journal. The jagged right-slant ink of what is left of him, the alive pieces of my father, are there. Exhale.

I am so proud of your accomplishments: Your great singing voice. Makes my heart melt when you sing.

One of the funniest things you did: brought the boy home with the cowboy outfit. ha! ha!
I really felt sorry for you tho…really.

The most fun thing we ever did together was: go to Myrtle Beach the first time (time was so short)
Time was so short. One place that daddy still exists is in the scrawl and scribble of our journal. Some try to convince me of the heart and soul bullshit, the eternal connection of fathers and daughters, but I’m not naive. If I fell for that, I’d have to face the ink and finish reading. I have not made it past page five, and I do not intend to do so. To read further would only make him die again and again. To read further would mean giving up every new piece of my living father…the living father that exists in his unread words. If I do not read, then there is still something yet to be discovered about him, and he still exists in the pages.

And sometimes he visits me in dreams...

A phone rings in an unfamiliar kitchen.
hello?
hello precious
daddy?
I love you
but
I’m alright
are you safe?
now wake up wake up wake up precious

I panic—someone told me what they actually do to dead bodies.
They have wired his mouth shut.
Their hands have sealed his eyelids.
They have invading to find the cause.
He never liked being cold...and now he is. I lay on top of the earth.
To keep him warm to keep him warm.

A phone rings on the wall of an unfamiliar hallway
hello?
hey! hey! whacha doin’ girl?
(chuckles)
you must be alive
Everything is better now
oh thank god

He is alive. How did it happen?
How did he escape the bronze box? Mom saw him,
kissed him, closed the lid.
How did he escape? He crawled out, unnoticed, quietly just
before they sealed him in the hearse. No one knew. No one saw.
Now wake up wake up wake up precious.

The “conference” room at the funeral home is too big. As the funeral director guides my mother, brother, and I into the room, seven faces glare at us from around the table—my father’s parents and siblings. They have always hated us. And now that he’s dead, they hate us even more. Even though no one says a word as we enter, the anger in their eyes is the loudest noise I’ve ever heard. I am confused. Is this how it goes? Is the room always this full of people who didn’t give a damn about the person who has died? Is the room always this full of hatred? I talk myself out of a panic attack...hear my father’s voice say, not here, not now, not in front of them. The funeral director asks how we would like “things” to go; when and where will the service be held? With Southern Baptist passion, each of the siblings responds at the same time. Let’s bury him on Monday...
Sunday...how about Tuesday? I’ll be damned if the service is gonna be in a Catholic church. He will be buried in our family cemetery; there is one spot left. Good thing he was saved at age fourteen. My mother, brother, and I suddenly seem so small, so insignificant. We sit in tears and confusion and darkness. Finally, my brother calmly speaks up, Dad did not want to be buried there. This is met with, You shut up. You have no say in this, especially after what you did to him last week. Remember, Larry, you were the one who fought with him and drove off. You shut up. Remember? He’ll never forget. Larry looks as if he’s decided against ever
It is a long walk up the velvet-like stairs of the funeral home. The cherry wood banister is hard under the weight of my palms, as I will my body step by step. My mother, Larry, and I are walking to the second floor, which houses the “beds for the dead” room. Somehow his parents and siblings have allowed us this task. We each are drawn to separate coffins. I study the deep-dark glossy wooden one in the corner. My fingers run along the soft inner lining, the baby-cotton blanket, the air-light cushioned bottom. If only the living had comfort like this. My brother is staring at a white coffin that displays a scene of golfing, with putter and green airbrushed along the side. We think but don’t say that is ridiculous, but dad would have loved it. Mom is looking at the vault selections. He will be triple packed—coffin, vault, dirt. Sir, we have no money. No life insurance. Absolutely no money. The funeral director shows us the $500 special. Special? It is a hideous bronze color, but the lining and blanket are still soft.

I refuse to look at my father during his “wake.” Family and friends keep pressuring me, “oh, you’ll feel much better if you just go look at him, darlin’.” I don’t think so. I cannot imagine a worse thing to do than to look at my dead blue father in the “$500 special” bronze casket, stiff-still, unable to move his lips, blink his eyes, laugh, cough, or love…ever again. I am the only one who cannot bring myself to move from the foyer couch—the securest place to be if you are trying to avoid a body. I am guilty of not standing by my father. I am guilty of not standing by my mother who stands by my father. My father’s mother whispers to the passersby, he was going to leave them, then points at us. These same visitors, some of whom I’ve never met, approach my couch with condolences, thankfully ignoring her ridiculous stories. In me they recognize my father’s face, his soft eyes, and what would be a smile. When I have to go to the bathroom, I make my husband check around every corner before I go further because I am afraid I will accidentally walk into the wrong room and be forced to look. I rely on braver folks’ descriptions of him. He looks good…young…has a slight smile…comfortable. Comfortable? Comfortable. His arms are too long. His hands are covered with the coffin-blanket because they are clasped below his belly. As a result, no one can see his wedding band, another detail upon which my mother still lingers. Mom has chosen some of his “lazy day” clothes for him to wear instead of the black suit that is usually worn by the dead on such occasions. I do not want to look at him—not only because the very thought of dead bodies throws me into panic attacks, but because I want to remember him as he was the last time I saw him …alive, chuckling, and calling me precious.

Before the funeral, my father’s mother brings my mother and me into a secluded room. She hisses. I know you killed him, Michele. You worked him to death all those years. I suddenly know how to respond and with all sincerity, Do you really think Jesus would want you to say such things? I gently take my pain-shocked mother by her hand
and walk out of the room.

As we sit in the front pew of the Baptist church, my father's coffin on a steel gurney, I begin to deny. I begin to regret. I begin to hate. And then I am angry that these emotions are getting in the way of me missing my daddy. He's lying a few feet away from me, and I can't even ask him how all this happened, can't hug him and feel secure, can't wipe away the hurt that his spirit must be feeling at this moment. I imagine his spirit frantically trying to get my attention, floating beside or above me, reassuring me that he loves me. Then the service begins and he disappears into the music. Music? As an offering to God, the congregation sings the hymn, How Great Thou Art.

The preacher, who has never met daddy, says Jeff was a nice man, loved his children. Lucky for him he was saved at age fourteen. Make sure you don't end up like him without being saved because Jesus says that no one shares in the kingdom of heaven who has not accepted him as savior. Amen.

A few months after Daddy's funeral my mother has a garage sale. I travel home from college to help her. She can no longer pay the mortgage and is preparing to move and has convinced herself that my father's things cannot come with her. She is determined to leave it all behind...to leave him behind. I come home to a garage full of Daddy's clothes, shoes, and tools and a trash can full of wooden carved plaques that read "Jeff and Michele," "Welcome to the Coles' home," and "Family is a blessing." She saves only one box, which keeps safe his hearing aid, high school class ring, and a watch. Everything else is suffocating her; it has to go. Dissociation becomes my safe haven...the only way in which to weave through the garage that is full of his life-smell. On sale day, we gather early, strong coffee in hand, and open the garage doors to the chill of the 6am October of North Carolina. Piece by piece, we watch as Daddy's clothing sells for 50 cents a pop, watch as his tools are picked up, inspected, and set back down, and picked up again...hey lady, does this thing work? Ma'am, I'll give you a dollar for both of these. This has a hole in it; how much will you take? I pocket dollars and quarters, feeling like a traitor as I betray article after article of my father's possessions. Mom is wiping away tears while placing sold items in used grocery bags. I float through the “thank yous” and the “have a nice days,” quietly holding myself intact while watching my mother fall apart. Only two months have passed since daddy died.

An old man, with beautiful wrinkles, walks up our drive-way, jingling garage sale monies in his pocket. He pauses, picks something up, decides against it, places it back down. He fumbles through my father's shirts, decides against them, moves on. He sways in and out of the tools and knick-knacks and boxes full of Daddy's unfinished dreams—his lawn and garden machines that he was using to make the yard beautiful, seeds of flowers never planted, tattered work gloves. Not interested. He finally stops in front of Daddy's shoes. Studying the brown, worn-torn loafers, he takes a sudden interest. Slowly he peels off his own shoes. He is very careful about it. He glides his feet smoothly into Daddy's loafers. His feet wiggle to get comfortable, making sure it's the right fit, walking to the left and right. My mother stands next to me watching the scene unfold before us. Daddy will never step into those shoes again, and even though I stand silently, my mother nods slightly and whispers I know, I know. The old man decides that Daddy's shoes are just right. He leaves them on, walks to me, hands me 50 cents, says thank you. As the quick softness of his wrinkled fingers graze my open palm, I come back into myself and feel the wind for the first time that day.

My hand rests on daddy's shoulder for balance. My right foot extends, as he holds my wedding slipper. Daddy is handsome in his tuxedo and tie and smile. Down on a knee, he is holding a penny. He explains that the penny belonged to my grandpa and the date on it, 1955, is the year that he, my father, was born. This heirloom brings good luck if worn in your shoe on your wedding day. I have never heard of this tradi-
tion, but it doesn’t matter because it belongs to us. Placing the penny in my shoe, he looks up, are you ready, precious?

It is now our turn to walk. As I round the corner of the daisied and laced archway, daddy’s arm tightens around my own. The closer we get, the more he seems unwilling to let me go. There are so many people staring at me, people I don’t know, people looking at me, people staring with smiles, too many people. Daddy I can’t breathe. I begin my third panic attack of the day on my way down the aisle. I...can’t...breathe. I don’t know if I can do this...I can’t do this. My throat closes, my stomach collapses, I begin to turn pale. Daddy holds me up, says it’s ok, you can do this, you are strong, I won’t let go...pretend these people aren’t here...I am here, I won’t let go...almost there. My father gives me my breath. He gives me the will to inch further. Suddenly I am calmer. He holds me tight, then reluctantly releases my waist and hand, lifts my veil, whispers I love you, precious. Later as we dance the father-daughter dance, he tells me I’m beautiful, holds me tight, then reluctantly releases my waist and hand to my new and wonderful husband. But it is clear, well after the ceremonies are over, that he has not truly let me go.
C. River  
Photo by Amy Sayers

Windowsill Watcher  
Photo by Tina Wright

Space Needle  
Photo by Chelsea Parvin

A Proud Bird  
Photo by Jordan Haynes
My Haunted Savannah
by Michele Kinney

My Haunted Savannah began innocently enough with laughter and anticipation as we waited for our mysterious trolley to appear and take us into Savannah’s past. As we stood at the edge of the ballast cobble brick street, a sudden thunderclap overhead signaled something would be happening soon. As the time passed and still no trolley in sight, the rain began to fall upon our heads. Huddled together under an awning, my husband, son, and I stood tight waiting for the beginning of our promised adventure. We did not have to wait long.

A sudden noise around the building corner caught our attention as the haunted trolley swooped into view, and the sound of hard brakes being applied caught my breath as the trolley stopped right in front of my son. The swish of the trolley doors opened and out walked a character from the past. She was dressed all in black. A widow’s dress, complete with black shawl, black hat, nineteenth-century hooped skirt, and black button down shirt. With her large black hat and crooked mischievous grin, she welcomed everyone onboard. Her hazel eyes gleamed as her dark gloved hand beckoned guests to their seats. Not wanting to miss a thing, we sat on the second row and looked around at the black drapes lining the windows and skull and bones lining the dashboard. We were ready to be scared.

We looked around at our companions onboard the trolley and questioned their inattention to their surroundings. Didn’t they notice the skulls, the black drapes, the black box the widow held in one hand? They were too busy talking on their cell phones and to each other about such mundane things as restaurants, who they last talked to, and what was happening back at their homes. They were oblivious to the trolley and the widow. Weren’t they scared? Even a little?

We quickly realized our trolley companions would never be impressed with anything they encountered. They expressed the attitude of the “I’ve seen it all – I’ve done it all” boorish manner and behaved as if they were only on the tour because they did not have anything else to do.

Once seated and settled in, our widow began telling us about Savannah’s haunted past. As our driver drove us in the rain down one uneven cobble street after the next, the widow told us stories about pirates, murder, and other gruesome crimes that had occurred in houses, alleys, and cemeteries. The guide narrated Savannah’s history with the gusto of someone who had witnessed it herself.

She pointed to a city block that would not grow Spanish moss because people had been hung from the trees, their ghosts somehow protecting their last bodily residence. With no reaction from her audience, she next drove to a house and pointed to the second story window where the ghosts of children who had died long ago were still seen looking out the windows. I peered through the trolley window straining through the rain to see the ghostly children, but only saw mannequins placed in the window. Apparently the current homeowners had heard the ghostly story and had a sense of humor.

Because of the rain, we were informed that we could not stop and walk around the graveyard. As our trolley pulled over to the curb beside the cemetery, the widow began to tell us tales about the numerous duels that took place. Then she informed us the traditional spot for duels in the city was the area next to the cemetery. I could not help but think how convenient that was for the city undertaker. Then the guide informed us with her outstretched arm and finger pointed that the area where the duels took place today is a playground for children. I turned my head and looked. Sure enough
there was a playground. I could not help but wonder if their parents knew. Would it matter? I gazed around once again to my fellow passengers for their reaction believing somehow that they might represent a portion of parents with young school-age children. Still talking and not paying any attention to the guide or her stories, I sighed at their lack of enthusiasm or concern. The rain had not let up and continued to fall, adding a mist to the area.

By the time we arrived at our last stop of the evening, it was pouring. I was shivering from the cold. I was tired. Our guide informed us that we were to disembark and enter one of the most haunted houses in Savannah. As our trolley pulled up next to a multistoried home, I was sitting on the opposite side in the trolley and could not see it. I only saw the rain against the windows. Sitting near the front, I felt the cold wind rush in and blow on my face as the widow opened the door. Having settled into my seat, accepting my fate of being with bored companions, I did not want to want to get out. Of course, the rain and wind contributed to my lack of enthusiasm. Lining up with the group, I toddled down the wet steps of the trolley and out with the rest. Keeping my eyes downward looking where I placed my feet trying to not step in the rain puddles, I did not see the entrance to the home. I simply followed the line as we walked first up steps and then down steps into a basement. We were met with the house guide and directed to enter a back room hidden behind two large sliding paneled doors. Once inside, I could not help but see the different colored chalk designs on the floor. It was detailed and ornate. Letters and symbols arranged in a circle. The house guide, a petite woman in her 50s, informed us that at least two deaths had occurred on the property involving the same man. Two women had lost their lives, through different means, because of love. I smelled incense and looked around the room for its source. Against one wall was an altar. Food, animal bones, and lit candles sat upon a black-draped table. I heard the sound of rain beating overhead. The house guide informed us that the original family worshiped an ancient religion and that the altar and floor drawings were meant as offerings to the god of love.

We left the room and climbed up two flights of stairs and across a hallway into a dual parlor and dining room stopping in what was really one large open room. The guide stood at the front of the dining table and told us how the lady of the home and her husband’s mistress had died. The guide pointed to the room’s ceiling as she told us how the wife committed suicide by jumping from the top floor to her death outside the dining room window. One of her sons upon hearing how and why his mother had died, went to the guesthouse and strangled to death his mother’s rival. The guide informed us that ghost hunters had captured the sounds of the mistress on tape. She then played us a tape of a women screaming and wailing loudly. Afterwards, the room quickly cleared. Everyone, except me, had left. It was that fast. In an instant, they were all gone. I stood there alone in the empty room looking around wondering what had happened.

I walked alone down the house steps and out the door right into a puddle. Water splashed up to my knee over my jeans. Immediately, my leg was cold and wet. As I sat down in my second row seat, for the first time that night - I heard silence. I looked around at the guests, not a word was said, not a cell phone texted. Unbelievable, I thought. And all I had was a wet leg.
The Shadowman
by Ryan Wood

1

The door, which had been closed when the light went out, stood open, just a crack. It stood across the moonlight stricken room from the bed, and according to his father, it was home to nothing more than clothes and the toys he no longer played with. The door was not fully illuminated by the moonlight, but only vaguely hinted at. Its shape could be made out, but it was shrouded in darkness. The walls of the room were a blue, which was warm and welcoming in the day time, but seemed as dark as his father’s evening glass of wine when the lights went out and it was time to fight off sleep another night.

Benjamin lay on his bed, looking at the closet door with wide eyes. His father had opened that door before leaving him in the dark and shown him again, that there was nothing inside of which to be afraid. He had successfully remained awake for one hour since his father had closed the bedroom door, staring unflinchingly at the closet the whole time. He could hear The Shadowman breathing in harsh gasps from behind it. Its sharp, yellow claws waited behind the door, and Ben could see its bloodshot eye glowing in the darkness, peaking out at him, waiting for him to fall asleep. Ben didn’t think The Shadowman could get him while he was awake. It seemed as though it had to wait for sleep to take him.

For almost a week, Ben struggled with this every night. His mother wanted to get him a night light (as though such a ridiculous thing could stop The Shadowman) but his father had stood firm on the matter, saying that Ben had to face the darkness alone and face his fears. He had taken a Pall Mall from the pack in his shirt pocket, struck a wooden match with his thumbnail, and inhaled deeply. When Ben’s father smoked in front of him, Ben knew it was serious. “Son,” he had said putting his right arm around his shoulders. They were sitting outside on the front porch swing, slowly rocking back and forth. “Do you want to go around for the rest of your life afraid all the time?”

“No daddy.”

“You have to face your fears, son. You can’t be afraid of things that don’t make sense. There is nothing in your closet but your clothes and those damn toys that you never play with. This thing... this... what is it that you call it?”

“Shadowman.” Ben examined his feet, feeling like the world’s biggest idiot. “He’s The Shadowman.”

Benjamin’s father took another long drag from his cigarette. “This shadowman is nothing more than a figment of your imagination, buddy. It’s not real. Do you understand?”

“Yes daddy.” His voice was strong, reassuring, but when he woke up screaming for the fourth night in a row with The Shadowman standing just outside the closet, his father had not been quite so understanding this time. He had stormed into the room, angry with him, yelling. He had pulled the closet door open again and pointed into it, where nothing more scary than dirty clothes and dilapidated boxes awaited. He had not comforted him this time, but bellowed at him. “You have to face these ridiculous fears, Ben! You’ll never get anywhere in life if you don’t!”

The next night, he had lain awake for three hours before sleep overpowered his overburdened mind. He awoke screaming, seemingly minutes later. The Shadowman had crept all the
way to his bedside. It was poised above
him with its yellow claws ready to peel
the skin from his face. Sores riddled The
Shadowman’s face, as well as its strong
arms, broad shoulders, and its decaying
stomach. They ran openly with yel-
low puss and thick, dark blood. Its teeth
were razor sharp, yellow like its claws,
and flesh was caught in them, hanging
in flaps. The blood from the sores ran
down its grinning face and directly into
its mouth. The Shadowman did not
have a nose and Benjamin could see
directly into its nasal cavity. He could
smell its breath like a bucket full of fish,
rotted in the sun for a week. Its red,
glowing eyes danced with laughter, and
it brought its face up close to his.

“The first thing I’m going to do,” it
whispered, “Is rip out that tongue so you
can’t scream anymore.” The Shadow-
man put its hand over Ben’s mouth to
stop the sound of it and laughed with
his deep voice. He continued to try, the
sound of his voice muffled by the blood
soaked, sore ridden hand. He could
taste it, as some of the liquid seeped
through his lips and into his mouth. It
was rancid, like sour milk. He stopped
trying to scream so that no more of that
taste would touch his tongue.

“When I’ve eaten every last bit of
you that I can stomach, I’ll take your
non-believing parents.”

What went through Ben’s mind then
was not fear, but rage. Never again
would his father take him fishing. He
would never play baseball with him
again or clap him on the back, laughing
at one of his jokes. His mother would
never talk to him about school or his
friends again, never cook his favorite
doll if that was what he wanted to do.

The Shadowman pulled his comforter
back to get started, Ben’s rage over-
powered his fear and he screamed at it.
“Back to get started, Ben’s rage over-
powered his fear and he screamed at it.

The Shadowman pulled his comforter
back to get started, Ben’s rage over-
powered his fear and he screamed at it.

The Shadowman could see it from
the closet, laying in its bed, trembling
with fear. He did not wait for it to go to
sleep because that was when he
wanted to take his meal. He waited be-
cause he wanted it to be afraid when he
took it. Its fear strengthened him, while
its thoughts allowed him to come back
night after night. With each passing
night, its fear had grown and with it, The
Shadowman’s strength. He enjoyed the
new form it had conjured for him. He felt
strong and powerful. He could easily rip
the boy apart and cast it aside like a rag
doll if that was what he wanted to do.

The fear of a boy was stronger,
more substantial than that of an adult.
An adult’s fears consisted of superficial
whining and material worth. Does my
wife still love me? Is my husband cheatin-
g on me? Can I pay all the bills this
month? And on and on. An endless
string of senseless worries and self-
evaluations. A child feared the vampire
at the window, begging entrance to
suck the body dry, the monster beneath
the bed, the thing in the closet. The
child’s fear was real, almost tangible in
its clarity and intensity.

The boy wouldn’t fight him. It
had pissed all over itself at the very
thought of being alone with him without
its father’s help. But it had been angry at
the mention of its family. There was that
to think about. The Shadowman dis-
missed the thought. It was unimportant.
The time would come tonight. He
waited, slowly cracking the door open
wider. This trick never failed to induce
the fear of a child. He could see it trem-
bling now. Soon, he thought as its fear
mounted. Soon.

Benjamin couldn’t keep going on
like this. He had to kill The Shadowman
or die trying because the alternative
was to die doing nothing, and then his
parents would be next in line. Ben could
still see the red eye glaring at him from
the closet across the room. The moon-
light shone on the walls with only mild il-
illumination. But it was enough so that
Ben could see the blood dripping from
all four walls of the room, and he knew
that The Shadowman had conjured this
illusion to scare him more. And it
worked. Ben was afraid of the work
ahead. It would be near impossible, and
Ben was sure he would probably fail. His heart was hammering in his
chest, hard and fast.

Ben’s weapon was in the closet with
The Shadowman. His father had been
angry with him when he saw that he had
removed it from the closet. He said
there was no reason for Ben to bring
toys with him to bed, and he had put it
back in the closet without a thought. His
father hadn’t understood the impor-
tance of what he thought was a toy. Now
he had only made it more difficult for
Ben to fight The Shadowman.

With stiff arms, Ben pulled back the
comforter and swung his legs over the
edge of the bed. He stood, turned, and
faced the door. He looked directly at
the eye of The Shadowman and stood his
ground.

His hands shook and his heart was
pounding, but Ben was unflinching.
“Come on,” he whispered.

The closet door opened, cracking
on its hinges, and The Shadowman
stepped out, his bloody feet making wet
smacking noises on the hardwood.
Benjamin could hear the liquid dripping
from its grotesque form onto the floor.
He could hear its breath more clearly
now and he could smell it once more.
Benjamin and The Shadowman stood
facing each other across the room.
The Shadowman let loose a scream of rage, its voice booming in the room, and the boy's heart beat ever faster. As afraid as he was, he took a step forward, challenging it. The Shadowman ran forward, charging at him and Ben ran too, charging right back. As they were about to collide, Ben dipped left like a quarterback going for the touchdown. He wasn’t quick enough, however, and The Shadowman’s outstretched arm caught him in the neck. He went sprawling on his back, knocking his head on the floor, dazing him momentarily. The Shadowman let out another full throated scream as it turned back to face him again. Ben sat up, gained his feet, and lunged forward as quickly as he could, but he still wasn’t fast enough. The Shadowman hit him in the back, scratching him and he dropped to his stomach in the closet doorway where he attempted to crawl to his weapon. The Shadowman grabbed him, lifted him like a bag of feathers while he screamed and dropped him on his back, still in the doorway of the closet. Pain shot through his back and head when he was slammed down.

It leaned forward and screamed at him again, taking him by the throat and blowing more decayed fish breath into his face. “You think you can face me brat?” Its claws dug into his throat, drawing blood, cutting him in several places along the neck. “I’ve devoured hundreds before you, and I will take hundreds more after you are dead!” It laughed, grinning, knowing that it would defeat the defenseless boy. Ben reached back as far as his arm could stretch. His weapon was just outside of his grasp. The pressure on his throat was threatening to make him pass out. He could feel the darkness closing in on him. He held on with all the strength he had left, keeping the image of his mother and father in his mind. “No,” he breathed in a choked voice. “You’re just a pigment of my imagination. You can’t hurt me.”

The Shadowman recoiled from his words, shocked that the boy would dare to spew such madness. The moment was enough for Ben. He pushed backward as far as he could and gripped his sword. He pulled it from the closet and it began to glow with a solid, unflinching blue light in his hands. The Shadowman lunged forward. As it did, Ben thrust his sword forward and it penetrated The Shadowman’s midsection. The same blue light that flashed from the sword poured out of its wound. It screamed with rage and pain and thrashed at Ben. It struck him in the chest and cut him deeply all the way to his stomach. Ben fell backward into the closet. The Shadowman reached.

“You’re not real!” Ben screamed. “I don’t even believe in you anymore and you can’t hurt me or my family EVER!” The Shadowman grabbed him beneath the arms with both arms and lifted him, shook him like a rag doll and then drew his face close to its own.

“I am real! And you will believe again when I begin to peel the skin from your face! It will be like taking the skin off a fruit.” The Shadowman’s claws dug into his back between the shoulders, drawing more blood. Benjamin was cut in several places now.

Ben pulled back his arm and plunged the sword forward into its chest. It screamed and dropped him again. Ben scrambled up and struck The Shadowman again in the midsection. The blue light was brighter now, stronger. The light was breaking through The Shadowman’s skin in hundreds of cracks. It was screaming in real pain now and clutching at the sword. “You can’t,” it screamed defiantly as if Benjamin wasn’t killing it. It stumbled backward toward the bed, trying to get away from Ben.

“You’re not real! And you can NEVER come back!” Ben ran forward and swung his sword in one final arch, aiming for the neck and striking home with tremendous force. The Shadowman broke into a million pieces then, shattering on the floor in a brilliant flash of light that illuminated the entire room.

Ben fell to his knees and saw that his father stood in the bedroom doorway, his mouth hanging open in a comical O of shock. Don’t worry, Daddy, he thought, You’re safe now. He was bleeding from at least fifteen different wounds from the shadowman’s claws. It stung like fire, and Benjamin closed his eyes against the pain. He was lying on the floor, covered in his own blood. His father’s paralysis broke, and he screamed in horror, running toward Ben from across the room. Ben could no longer fight for consciousness. He fell backward and knew only darkness for some time.

Benjamin’s belief in the shadowman had allowed it to live. His fear of it had strengthened it. But he overcame his fear, defeating it with what his father thought was nothing more than a plastic sword, given to him for Christmas and almost never played with. Ben faced his fear as his father told him to, and now he would live without fear.
Hurricane Katrina coming aground near Gulfport, MS
8/29/2005
Photo by June Noble

Taken to New Heights
Photo by Tina Wright

Let the Rocks Keep Silent
Photo by Tina Wright

Guitar
Photo by Chelsea Parvin
I had the opportunity to speak with Dr. Beck about the 2010 school year. When I spoke with Dr. Beck, I could not help but feel welcome in her office, and her excitement about Calhoun was infectious. She continually holds up her staff and faculty as the ones who make Calhoun shine. In speaking with her, I understand why Calhoun’s motto is “Your Community, Your College, Your Future.” This is probably because I feel her personal motto is “OUR Community, OUR College.”

Enrollment is at an all-time high with over 12,000 students. Dr. Beck attributes this to more people in the community needing Calhoun’s services. She feels improvements in the school and the expansion of the curriculum will only raise the standard of living for the families and the community of our area. This is also what Dr. Beck feels is the most challenging aspect for Calhoun. There are numerous opportunities for everyone, from those individuals looking to obtain degrees, to those just looking to improve themselves through adult education classes. How does Calhoun get the word out to these people? It is a challenge Dr. Beck is continually trying to improve.

The largest Grand Opening and Ground Breaking has been the Robotics Center located at the Decatur Campus. This one-of-a-kind facility puts a spark of excitement in Dr. Beck’s eyes. She says contributions have come from all aspects of society and refers to the Robotics Center as “Everybody’s Project.” Businesses and students of all ages have shown an interest in being part of the excitement. Also heading the way in the technology world is the renovation of the vacant building located across the street from the Math/Science Building on the Decatur Campus. This building is set aside for Calhoun’s foray into energy renewal. The renovation goes up for bid in February 2011, and will be the home for Conservation Technologies, such as biofuel and solar technologies. The facility will be LEED certified, which means it will meet US Green Building Council standards for practical and measurable green building design, construction, operation, and maintenance.

Another ground breaking marks an achievement that increases the community’s access to the visual arts: The Fine Arts Center in Decatur. This project required a pairing with Athens State University, and again, Dr. Beck’s excitement was palpable as she explained some of the expansions Calhoun can expect to see in the field of Visual Arts: pottery, ceramics, printmaking, and printing. According to Dr. Beck, the timing of securing an architect and construction could not have been better. Everything on the wish list will be included in one phase of construction. On the subject of the arts, we then discussed the Annual Writer’s Conference held in April. This will be the 10th conference and will feature author Michael Knight, who will be discussing his latest project, *The Typist*. Dr. Beck says every year people fill the auditorium to standing room only capacity. She feels it is one of the best activities for Calhoun students.

We had a conversation about the Delmore Archives being given a place of honor in Brewer Library. With this project, again, Dr.
Smoke No More
by Sarah Elizabeth Johnson

In the United States, a trend is being set to ban smoking in public areas. Colleges and universities are now following in the footsteps of restaurants, shopping centers, and ballparks by banning smoking. Recently, the town of Decatur passed a citywide smoking ban in public places, and Calhoun Community College followed suit this year by being the first college in Alabama to ban smoking. In fact, over three hundred colleges and universities in the United States have banned smoking on campus. This has been somewhat controversial; however, the campus leaders made the right decision because it does not infringe on students’ freedom to smoke, there is less littering, and there are fewer health problems.

Even though there is a ban on campus, students can still smoke. The smoking ban still allows students to smoke in their cars, or students can also go off campus to smoke. For example, here at Calhoun, there is a gas station across the street that is accessible to students where they can smoke. Even the colleges that have not banned smoking all together have limited the areas that students can smoke. Students at those schools are not allowed to smoke inside buildings and around the perimeter of the buildings. Having to go across the street or to a car is not much more inconvenient than finding a zone where students can smoke. To enforce this, most schools have twenty-five to fifty dollar fines if a student violates the ban.

Another widespread trend in the United States is to “go green.” We are constantly seeing public service announcements to clean up the environment. Calhoun has contributed to this cause by banning smoking. By doing this, there will be less littering. Smokers often toss their cigarette butts and empty packs on the ground at school. Some students also flick their ashes on the ground where people have to walk. At Calhoun, our president strives for our campus to look beautiful. A ban on smoking will cut down on litter, which will make the campus more appealing to potential students. Another advantage would be cutting down the cost of having to pay the people to clean the mess left by smokers.

It is no secret that smoking causes health problems for both the smoker and those around inhaling second-hand smoke. One major outcome of smoking is lung cancer. Additionally, there are many students who are pregnant, and inhaling second-hand smoke could be detrimental to the baby’s health. Those who choose to smoke are taking on that risk; however, it should not be for them to decide if others take on that risk by inhaling their smoke. For example, I am allergic to smoke, and being around it causes me to have a bad headache. Because of this, I choose not to smoke and appreciate that those in charge here at Calhoun have taken a step to protect others and myself.

This year, Calhoun Community College has taken a major step and somewhat of a risk by being the first college in Alabama to ban smoking. However, when one takes a step back and looks at the big picture, it is obvious to me that this was the right decision. Our ban on smoking helps the environment, makes our campus beautiful, and makes Calhoun a safer place to attend school. All this is done without infringing on the rights of students. Therefore, when one takes all this into consideration, it should be obvious that the benefits outweigh the risks and should not adversely affect the enrollment. I am proud to be a student at a college that has joined over three hundred other colleges nationwide in taking such a proactive step in making America’s college campuses a great place to attend school.
I felt I had to start my article about Ms. Helen Dunn and the Common Grounds Café with what her service people told me is one of her favorite sayings. Ms. Dunn seems to have a word of wisdom for anyone who walks in the door. She tells me that's why she's planning to stay at Calhoun... the small community and her ability to know the students well. She gets a warm smile and a sparkle in her eye when she talks about her regulars. While I was seated with her, she greeted just about everyone who walked in by name – and it was not a small number. The café stays busy as the new "hang-out" on campus. But, as busy at it is, Common Grounds provides a quiet place to read a book or magazine, as well as an exceptional place to meet with study groups.

Ms. Dunn tells me she submitted a proposal for the café because she has loved coffee since she could crawl, and it has always been a dream of her's to own a coffee shop. She has a CIS degree from Calhoun and previously worked as the start up manager for a coffee shop on the Beltline. I mentioned the changes she has already adopted, such as providing breakfast and coffee on the North side of the campus and continually fluctuating her hours to meet the demand. She tells me as long as there is need for the café, she'll be there for us. "But," she warns in another of her sayings, "use it or lose it!"

We spoke about her menu's best sellers: a Chicken Quesadilla ($3.00) followed closely by any one of her paninis ($4.75). She has added more "snack" foods to the menu, a little cheaper than the sandwich plates, to help out those who are hungry but on a budget. For drinks, most order a Smoothie or the White Knight (a delicious combination of vanilla, espresso, and milk.) She is thrilled to offer catering services and has received the contracts for the Chamber of Commerce meetings to be held on the campus and Upward Bound, a 6-week, on-campus event for high school students. Ms. Dunn is extremely proud of her 99/100 rating from a surprise health inspection, proof that her "words of wisdom" work!

On a personal note, Helen Dunn has two children and is extremely close with her family. Unfortunately, most of her relatives live quite a distance away. She says talking to students makes up for all her long-distance relationships. Her one regret? She wishes her mother and father, now deceased, could have seen her café. Well, Ms. Dunn, I think the Decatur Campus – faculty, staff, and students, alike – would say, "Your parents would be proud!"

The Common Grounds Café is located in the Brewer Library on the Decatur Campus. Hours of Operation are 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday-Thursday. The café is closed on weekends and holidays.
Critical Review of All in the Timing
by William R. Hargrove

I am sure the majority of us have heard the phrase, “It’s all in the timing.” It is typically thought the origins of that phrase come from comedic use on stage, how when a joke is set up or a comedy routine delivered. To be a success, it is in that ideal sweet spot of timing. This phrase is also used to describe how things just fit together in perfect sync at a point in space and time while delivering a great outcome. I would say both of these usages would be true of the Calhoun Community College Theater performance of All in the Timing, as it was indeed a brilliant performance in that ideal spot of timing.

This performance of All in the Timing is composed of five separate one-act plays written by playwright David Ives. Sure Thing, Words, Words, Words, The Universal Language, Variations on the Death of Trotsky, and The Philadelphia were the selections performed the afternoon I viewed this play. Thinking back across all five, it is not easy to pick a favorite because of the uniqueness each brought to the whole experience. However, not being able to play favorites with any does not mean that each was not a delight in its own right.

Sure Thing was the opening play and was a great jumping off point for the themes of this production. The first meeting between Betty and Bill played by Kelsey Parsons and Jonathan Little was the subject. Within this play, it had what I am sure we all wish for when a conversation becomes awkward, or just off track, or into an absolute train wreck – an instant reset for the conversation to continue with past mistakes discarded. This is clever in its writing, but the performances of Parsons and Little made it come alive.

Up next was Words, Words, Words. This little play came close to being my personal favorite of the group. So many literary allusions made my head spin just trying to keep up. Do not worry though; it was that delightful spin of a perfect funhouse ride. The three chimps, Swift, Milton, and Kafka, were the ideal ones to be in the driver’s seat of this comedy experiment. Ashley Hubbert, Quentin Barrentine and Zonie Fraiser delivered their parts as the aforementioned chimps in faultless character and with a great grasp of comedic timing and insight.

The Universal Language is the very funny tale of a con and his idealistic mark. Many times the use of language in this segment had me chuckling at the ways old words were repurposed and how hidden meanings could even linger within the words we use every day. The interplay between Damien Peters as Don, the professor of this new universal language, and Jessica Roach as Dawn, the awkward student, was priceless. As the story played out, it became a touching and hopeful tale, and Roach really had me feeling compassion for her character.

The following trick this play had up its sleeve was a trip into the amusingly absurd with Variations on the Death of Trotsky. Using a similar reset plot device as in Sure Thing, we see the last moments of the famous Russian novelist Trotsky’s life replayed with humorous effect. The cast of Joseph Bodkin, Tina Aderhold, Angie Williams, and Quentin Barrentine played off one another to the enjoyment of the audience.

Lastly, The Philadelphia is a place where we have all visited at least once, but no one wants to live there. As this play unfolds, we see the misadventure of two friends, Mark and Al, each in their situations, one where things do not go as desired and the other as a laid back ideal of life. Once again, Jonathan Little was great as Mark, and Ashley Hubbert, as Al, was a perfect chameleon in this role, showing a wide range in his acting talent.

All of these wonderful performances were tied up in the neat bundle of the production of The Black Theater. I loved the minimal setting and sets, and the manner in which the sets were rearranged between these one-act plays. There was an air of including the audience’s curiosity as we watched the shifting of the props and sets. No behind the curtain work here, it was all here for us to experience, and added to the overall experience of this delightful and quirky play.

In general, this was a great play, yet this play is something bigger than the whole of its parts. So many deft touches placed in these roles by the actors and by the production staff showcases the talent within this work. The directors, Bill Provin and Ashley Hubbert, as well as assistant directors, Jonathan Little, Sheela Agrawal, Damien Petters, and Jessica Roach, truly have a work of which to be proud with this presentation of All in the Timing.

Third Largest Snowfall on Record Closes Calhoun for First Week of 2011 Spring Semester
by Ryan Wood

The Tennessee Valley got a near record snowfall on Sunday, January 9th, 2011, the day before Calhoun Community College was to begin its Spring semester, turning the campus into a postcard perfect winter wonderland. With 8.9 inches of snow measured at the airport, it was the third largest snowfall since record keeping began in the 1890s. The last snowstorm of this magnitude occurred in 1988, with 9.6 inches measured. With roads impassible on Monday morning, the school was closed on the first day of the semester.

Many colleges opened back up on Wednesday morning, but Calhoun decided not to follow suit with roads, although passable, still being quite dangerous. Students, faculty, and staff waited for an agonizingly slow week for warmer weather to begin melting the snow that blanketed the Tennessee Valley. “It’s disappointing,” said Christopher Scrip, a sophomore. “Now we will have to play catch-up on a week’s worth of work.” Jessica Acker, another sophomore had a similar reaction. “I like snow, but driving in it is overrated,” she said with a hint of sarcasm.

Deadlines for Pell Grant students to buy books, the deadline for returns, and the add/drop period were all pushed back. Some instructors rushed the beginning of the semester in an attempt to catch up on the lost time. Others taught their classes like normal.

The school reopened on Thursday, January 13th, still looking like a winter wonderland. Despite the setback and lost time, life at Calhoun returned to normal.
Jill Chadwick, who has been with Calhoun Community College as a full-time instructor for twenty-eight years, is retiring this semester. Mrs. Chadwick is moving to England with her husband, Dave, and her eleven-year-old daughter, Katelyn.

Mrs. Chadwick has been a student favorite because of her sometimes offbeat means of instruction, her friendly attitude toward her students, and her desk dancing on test days. She has become known for dancing on her desk in order to ease the tension and relax her students before taking their tests. I sat down with her and asked about it. She tells me that on a trip to Greece, she was pulled out of the audience to dance on the table, which served as the stage. “I enjoyed it,” she said. “One’s whole perspective changes when looking down from the top of a table. When I returned to finish the semester and give exams, I noticed that the students seemed really nervous, so I climbed onto my desk and began dancing. The tension broke into laughter, and I’ve been dancing on desks ever since.”

The Muse has been graced by the presence of Jill Chadwick since 1987. For the last seven years she has been the chief editor, facilitating the process from submissions to judging and final publication. I asked Ms. Leigh Ann Rhea, who will be taking over this position next year, if she was feeling apprehensive about it. “Certainly,” she admits. “Mrs. Chadwick has done such a splendid job since she’s taken the helm that I think most anyone would be apprehensive about taking on the task.” But she goes on to say that Jill has created a “seamless” process that will be “an aid and comfort.”

In addition to being the chief Muse Editor, Mrs. Chadwick was the National President of Sigma Kappa Delta (the English Honor Society) from 2008 to 2010. When asked what she feels Mrs. Chadwick’s greatest contribution to the school has been, Ms. Rhea said, “As a former student, I can speak to her energy and enthusiasm. Having said that, she also holds her students responsible for their work with a measure of stubborn kindness.” Dr. Randy Cross says it is her “intelligence, dedication, superb instructing, and sense of humor;” Dr. Sheila Byrd adds that she and others can always count on Mrs. Chadwick.

I asked some of her colleagues about their favorite memory with her. Ms. Rhea told me an interesting story: “She and I came to work on a Thursday morning with news, that Jason Mraz was playing the Crawfish Boil in Birmingham, and by that afternoon, she had bought tickets and made hotel reservations for the both of us. We arrived at the venue having left the tickets in the hotel room and walked about halfway back to the hotel before hailing a cab to retrieve them.”

Mrs. Chadwick says she loves her colleagues and students and would “not be retiring if not for this opportunity to move to England. I have been so very fortunate to have my career at Calhoun. I’ve taught here since I was 23. It will be interesting to find out who I am when I’m not teaching!” Mrs. Chadwick says she plans to visit the cathedrals, join a book club, go on walks, and “try the pubs.” I asked some friends and colleagues for their parting words. From Dr. Randy Cross, “I thank fate for bringing [her] to us. How much fuller my life has been because of [her].” Dr. Byrd simply adds, “Rock on!” Finally, Leigh Ann Rhea says, “She has been so much to me: teacher, idol, inspiration, mentor, friend, fairy godmother, comforter, counselor, counselor, counselor. Did I mention counselor? Had she charged me for all of the advice she’s given over the years, she could retire. Oh, that’s right…”

On a personal note, as a former student of hers, I’m sorry to see her go, but glad to see her excited to be going somewhere new. I know from both experience and what other students have said that she has been well loved here at Calhoun, and she will be greatly missed. The Muse staff and Calhoun Community College wish her well and look forward to her visits back to North Alabama.
Calhoun community news . . .

The Decatur Student Government Association –
A Year in Review

by Bill M. Helms, SGA President

The Student Government Association’s Semi-Annual Retreat is a chance for the SGA to meet with all campus organization sponsors and officers to plan events for the coming year and, due to the large turn-out, ideas flowed freely. Fall Fest was the largest agenda item, and the success of that event proved that the time taken to plan it out was well worth it. We had many great entries for the Halloween Costume Contest, which showed off Calhoun’s creative talents. One of our other planning events is the Student Activities Council meeting. We were honored to have Dr. Beck, the College President, attend. She continues to be a wonderful supporter of Calhoun clubs and organizations. Two large projects were featured on the agenda, Operation Green Team and the BSA Dance-A-Thon for the Diabetes Association.

The SGA started the 2010 fall semester off right with the Student Success Symposium in the Kelly Gymnasium. The guest speaker gave terrific information to all who attended, and in September, the SGA sponsored the Welcome Back Cookout. The lighting of the grill became “Survivor - Campus Addition.” It only took two SGA officers, a few senators, and the Dean of Student Affairs to eventually right the wrong, but over 200 burgers were served to some hungry students!

The Red Cross Blood Drive was a great success, with 58 students and staff giving blood that day. I think it helped having the drive in two locations on campus, the Student Center and the Health Sciences building. More donations are always needed, so please come out and donate next time you see it advertised!

A new campus television show was launched this fall semester, 100% Calhoun TV. The program is hosted by the SGA, and it centers on updating the student body on campus happenings. Please let us know if your organization has an event or activity you would like featured. We also interview students to get their opinions on campus life and the events here at Calhoun.

I am impressed every day when I see the talent we have at Calhoun. We are truly blessed in the faculty, staff, and student body. Calhoun is a great place to find higher learning. The campus is a terrific place to walk and find quiet places to read and study; we must commend the hard-working staff and student body who help keep this campus beautiful. I know for me and many other students, Calhoun is a home away from home.

The Calhoun Black Student Alliance (BSA)

The Black Student Alliance is an organization tasked with promoting unity, success, and involvement at Calhoun Community College on both the Decatur and Huntsville campuses. In the fall of 2010, BSA held a Dance for Diabetes and participated in the Walk for Diabetes held at the Huntsville Botanical Gardens. These events raised $1010.00 for diabetes research. The Annual Meet and Greet was a great success as was the Soul Food Fest we sponsor annually. Our participation in Fall Fest selling hot dogs allowed us to raise funds for the “Goodie Bags” we distribute during our monthly nursing home visits. The BSA co-sponsored the Calhoun Breast Cancer Awareness Seminar and adopted angels for the Salvation Army Angel Tree.

Planned events for the Spring Semester are the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Remembrance Ceremony, an Art Exhibit spanning the month of February, the Gospel Fest, and an African American Film Festival.

The Calhoun Black Student Alliance meets the second and fourth Thursdays of every month at 1:00 p.m. Contact Student Affairs for more information.
The Calhoun Lady Warhawks plan to build on last year’s success (43-15-1) as they prepare for their 6th season of fastpitch softball competition. The plan for success has never wavered even though the team has faced some unpleasant health issues. The team rallied around Coach Keenum in the fall season as she faced radiation treatments. They wore t-shirts to celebrate the final day of treatment and constitution of “Man, I love it when a plan comes together.” Unfortunately, returning ACCC Regional All-Tournament Player Kristy Pevahouse is foregoing her final season of eligibility due to a second major knee injury. The third circumstance facing the Lady Warhawks is lack of outdoor practice time due to 8 inches of snow during first week of official practice.

With a solid group of sophomores returning and a strong freshman class, the Lady Warhawks have set their sights high to make the plan come together in the finals of the ACCC Regional Tournament and secure a trip to Utah for the NJCAA National Tournament. Returning pitcher Rachel Keeton (16-8) will anchor an improved freshman-laden pitching staff. Stephanie Swanson, an Alabama Sports Writer Super 10 Selection, will not only attempt to prevent runs but will be expected to help score from the batter’s box. Samantha Thorpe and Tasha Horne’s pitching style will complement Keeton and Swanson to make this year’s staff one of the strongest in Lady Warhawk history.

The infield will bring the most experience to the team with third baseman, Courtney McDonald, and All-Division shortstop, Anna Hall returning. Haley Maxwell will be the backup at third. All-Division Andrea Nolen will see action at all the infield positions and will add more depth in the outfield. There will be some new faces on the right side of the infield as Amy Anderson and Rachel Norton battle for playing time at first base. Both will see their names in the designated player position in the lineup. Returning utility player Kaitlyn Lowrey returns after a season-ending ankle injury to help out at second base and in rightfield. Slapper Lauren Bivens will also compete for playing time at second. Ashley Balch will guide the defense from behind the plate with Freshman Ashlee Beggs pushing her for playing time.

The outfield positions are the biggest question mark for the Lady Warhawks with the loss of the two All-Region players to graduation. No one has established themselves as the everyday player. Vying for playing time will be December 2010 Bob Jones High graduate Emily Payne, speedsters Kayla Dean and Staci Johnson, and power hitter Bryonna Jackson. Brittany Reed and Katie Annerton will see action in the corners of the outfield. Tasha Horne is expected to play outfield when not on the mound.

This season’s schedule will see the Lady Warhawks spending Spring Break in Central Florida as they compete against some of Florida’s most outstanding teams: Santa Fe CC, Hillsborough CC, and St. Petersburg CC. They will also face Northerner foes Tompkins Cortland CC from New York and Southern Maine CC.

The real challenge for the plan to unfold is how quickly the freshmen adapt to the intensity of the college game and how the sophomores respond to their new leadership roles on the field. Gaining confidence in the pre-conference season will be a must for the Lady Warhawks to see how and when the “plan really does come together.”
The team rallied around Coach Nancy Keenum in the fall season as she faced radiation treatments. They wore t-shirts to celebrate the final day of treatment and the team’s motto of “Man, I love it when a plan comes together.”

**CALHOUN LADY WARHAWKS SOFTBALL SCHEDULE**

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**CALHOUN WARHAWKS BASEBALL SCHEDULE**

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*ACCC Northern Division Conference Opponent*
SKD's Local Chapter Theta Beta Continues Book Buddies Program

by Melissa Penley, West Decatur Elementary Reading Coach

We are very fortunate to have students from Calhoun Community College that volunteer biweekly at our school, West Decatur Elementary. The Calhoun students come twice a month to read with some of our third grade students that need some extra reading help. Our students enjoy the individual help and attention they receive from the college students, and the college students seem to enjoy it just as much or maybe even more. Our students ask me each week if “the big kids” are coming to read with them, and they are thrilled when they walk in the classroom and see “the big kids” waiting for them. The college students brought some special Halloween books to give to each of our third graders in October, and the third graders are still asking me if they can read those books again and again. We are very appreciative for the support from our reading buddies from Calhoun. We hope this will continue to be a partnership for years to come. This project was the winner of the National SKD Activity Award.
Dedication

This 2011 Muse is dedicated to Ms. Jill Chadwick who will be retiring in May.

She has been the editor of the Muse since 2004 and a member of the editorial staff since 1988. Her talents brought this publication to the level of a national award-winning literary magazine and her influence will be remembered and emulated for years to come.

Ms. Chadwick has spent the last 28 years at Calhoun enriching the lives of her students and colleagues. Her wit, humor, insight, intelligence, kindness, and so many more wonderful aspects of her character will be sorely missed.

“Parting is such sweet sorrow.”

- William Shakespeare

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Published by the Department of Language and Literature and Sigma Kappa Delta.

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